

COUNTY OF ERIE

Operating Principles

Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County

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The Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County strives to build and strengthen a sustainable and just regional food system through policy recommendations, awareness, education and advocacy.



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Purpose and Duties

Definition:

The Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County (FPC) is an advisory council that provides local governments, as well as residents, information and advice about various policies and programs that support community-based food systems.

A community-based food system emphasizes, strengthens and makes visible the relationships among producers, processors, distributors and consumers of food at the local level.

The economic benefits of a well-functioning community-based food system include an increase in direct marketing partnerships between producer and consumer, urban and rural economic growth, and an increasing number of dollars that remain through locally produced products.

In addition, the FPC can also address issues of food security, land-use, access to healthy, fresh, affordable food, procurement of locally produced food; barriers in permitting and licensing that discourage access to and development of healthy, fresh, affordable food retail.

Goals of the FPC of Buffalo & Erie County:

1. To lead the effort in creating a more equitable and sustainable food system
2. To promote activities to strengthen the local food system including food production (farming), food processing, food wholesale, food distribution, food retail, and food disposal
3. To review and comment upon laws, policies, and plans to ensure that they strengthen the local food system which creates a mechanism for bringing the voice of Buffalo and Erie County's food system stakeholders to the local government
4. To collaborate in the exploration of new, innovative solutions to improve the local food system
5. To make proposals and recommendations to local government officials on existing and new policies
6. To support activities that educate and inform the local public about the local food system
7. To promote activities that ensure that consumers in Buffalo and Erie County have access to healthful and affordable food
8. To advise on activities that ensure that various local government entities work in a coordinated fashion to support the local food system
9. To educate and inform schools, parents and students about the local food system and benefits of incorporating healthy food into school meals
10. With assistance from the City of Buffalo and Erie County, to periodically assess the state of the local food system and outline a course of action for improving the food system



Staff Support Person (FPC Coordinator)

Responsibilities:

1. Manage letters of support, record meetings and insure that public notice is given for Full Council meetings
2. Coordinate meeting times and locations
3. Track attendance and member voting eligibility
4. Provide support to the Council Notetaker/Secretary by proof-reading, correcting and disseminating minutes
5. Assist in the development of social media and be responsible for updates.
6. Serve as the FPC spokesperson and will be responsible for maintaining a consistent, controlled message when making public statements or speaking to the media.

Membership

The FPC will be composed of 15-20 members.

Appointment to the FPC:

Appointment to the FPC will consist of a hybrid model of appointed seats which represent government and municipal agencies and stakeholder seats which represent all sectors of the food system selected through an open application process.

Membership Composition:

1. The FPC will include a combination of appointed seats and stakeholder seats, with 65% of the membership made up of the stakeholder seats listed below.
2. Best efforts will be made to ensure that at least one individual from all of the listed seats will be represented.

Appointed Seats:

- Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
- Erie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
- Erie County Department of Health
- Municipal representatives (ex. urban, suburban and rural) (i.e. City of Buffalo)
- Food Assistance (i.e. Social services (SNAP), WIC)
- Board of Health
- Cornell Cooperative Extension

Stakeholder Seats:

- Farmers (urban/rural, producers of diverse products)
- Processors
- Distributors/Wholesalers
- Retailers (small/large, direct-to-consumer)
- Consumer
 - o Youth



- Senior
- Low food access
- Urban
- Rural
- Migrant workers
- Waste
- Emergency Food (i.e. Food Bank of WNY)
- Institutional representatives (i.e. Erie 1 BOCES, Prisons, Daycare Centers, Nursing Homes)
- Academic Researcher – defined as an individual with advanced training and experience in the study and practice of local and regional food systems planning or policy. The individual must be formally affiliated with a local institute of higher learning such as a university, college or research institution in the capacity of a faculty member or researcher with a focus on food policy or research related to the food system.
- Other – Anyone who works in a food related capacity (ex. entrepreneur, culinary, financier, dietician, etc.)

Terms of Appointment

Appointed Seats

1. Appointed terms will be unlimited due to the nature of the appointment and the positions held. These will be standing seats and will ensure the continuity of the council. Should an appointed seat be vacant, it is the responsibility of the organization and/or board to notify the Council Chair and the FPC Coordinator when a new representative will be filling a vacant, appointed seat.

Stakeholder Seats

1. Stakeholder terms will be limited to two years, with the option to reapply at the end of the term if desired.

Expectations of Members

1. Members are expected to attend all Full Council, standing committee and working group meetings that they are part of.
 - a. If a member has missed 4 out of the last 6 Full Council meetings, then the Full Council will vote on whether or not the member will retain his/her seat.
2. Attendance will be taken at each meeting.
3. Members will be appointed to serve on one standing committee that aligns with their expertise and skills. A member may elect to serve on one or more standing committees, but no more than two.
4. Members are expected to serve on at least one working group during each term served. Service on a working group should begin no later than the start of their second year of a two year term.
5. Members are expected to complete all action items set forth in the time frame allotted.
6. A member who seeks to resign from the council shall submit a written resignation to the chair of the council or the FPC staff support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is



hired; at which time this request would go through the FPC Coordinator). If possible, the resignation should allow for a 30 day notice.

FPC Code of Conduct

1. FPC members will carry out their responsibilities to the exclusion of any personal advantage.
2. FPC members should avoid any situation involving conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between their personal interests and the performance of their FPC duties. If such a conflict arises, members should promptly withdraw from participation in decision-making connected with the matter. If the conflict is potential rather than actual, FPC members should seek legal or ethics advice about whether they should recuse themselves from the situation that is creating the conflict or the appearance of a conflict.
3. FPC members should refrain from making public statements or accepting media requests on behalf of the FPC.
 - a. Such requests should be funneled through the FPC spokesperson (FPC staff support person/ FPC coordinator) who will maintain a consistent, controlled message when making public statements or speaking to the media.

Officers

Council Officers

1. Council officers include:
 - a. **Chair:** The chair will preside over council meetings, work with the FPC support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time he/she would work with the FPC Coordinator) to develop the meeting agenda and represent the council at ceremonial functions. The chair will remain an unbiased representative of the council and will not have voting privileges except in the event of tie vote. Essentially, the chair will serve as the public face of the Council.
 - i. The chair is responsible for ensuring that in his/her absence the vice chair is able to perform his/her duties. If the vice chair is unable/unavailable to serve in this capacity, it is the chair's responsibility to appoint another council member/ staff support person (unless an FPC coordinator is hired).
 - b. **Vice Chair:** In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will perform all the above duties.
 - c. **Primary Secretary:** In the absence of a notetaker, the Primary Secretary is responsible for taking minutes at the Full Council meetings and getting these typed minutes to the FPC staff support person (unless a FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time the minutes would go to the FPC Coordinator) for timely dissemination (within five working days of the FPC meeting).
 - d. **Secondary Secretary:** In the absence of the Primary Secretary, the Secondary Secretary will perform the above duties.



2. Officers will be elected every 18 months by a majority vote of the FPC at the first regular meeting before January 1st or June 30th.
3. The term of office shall be 18 months, beginning January 1st or July 1st and ending June 30th or December 31st. An officer may continue to serve until a successor is elected. A person may not serve as a council officer for more than 2 consecutive 18 month terms.
4. A member may not serve as council officer and committee chair at the same time.

Standing Committee Chairs

1. Each committee will have a chair.
 - a. The chair will preside over standing committee meetings and represent the committee at Full Council meetings. The committee chair will be responsible for facilitating communication between meetings with the other members of the committee, the FPC staff support person (unless a FPC coordinator is hired; at which time this would go to the FPC Coordinator) and the council chair. In addition, the chair will be responsible for notifying the FPC staff support person (unless a FPC coordinator is hired; at which time this would go to the FPC Coordinator) of potentially applicable website/social media content.
2. Committee chairs will be selected every 18 months by majority vote of the FPC standing committee at the first regular meeting before January 1st or June 30th.
3. The term of office shall be 18 months, beginning January 1st or July 1st and ending June 30th or December 31st. A chair may continue to serve until a successor is elected. A person may not serve as chair of a standing committee for more than 2 consecutive 18 month terms.
4. A member may not serve as council officer and committee chair at the same time.

Committees/Working Groups

Standing Committees

1. Standing committees will be composed of only FPC members.
2. New members will be assigned to a standing committee that is best aligned with their skills and expertise.
 - Members are assigned rather than self-selected because each committee needs to have individuals that are experts in that particular area. What the committee brings to the Full Council is thus the sound judgment of experts in the field.
3. The structure of the standing committees will be evaluated every 3 years and the Full Council, using Roberts Rules of Order, has the ability to dissolve or create committees.
4. Standing Committees will develop and finalize recommendations using the consensus-1 model.
 - a. Final recommendations of the standing committee will be brought to the Full Council for a vote to accept or send back to committee.



5. The FPC Support Staff (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time this would be the responsibility of the FPC Coordinator) will include committee reports in each quarterly meeting of the standing council.

Committee	Role
Policy	- This committee is charged with monitoring the policy process in Buffalo and Erie County. Individuals on this committee are tasked with identifying relevant policy issues that the council needs to work on.
Community Engagement	- This committee is charged with educating the community about what the FPC is, what it does and how to get in contact with members.
Advocacy and Justice	- This committee is tasked with monitoring what other social justice groups are doing, and identifying issues related to food that affect under-represented and underserved groups. This committee also identifies opportunities for organizing campaigns related to food issues in the region.

Table 1. Current Standing Committees

Working Groups

1. FPC will establish up to 4 working groups per year based on community need.
2. Working groups will be specific to an issue.
3. In order to establish a working group – a member of the FPC will research a specific policy/topic/subject area and then bring the research back to the Full Council to look at through the lenses of the food system sectors.
4. Working group will dissolve when no longer needed.
5. Working groups will have representation from all 3 standing committees.
6. Working groups can include members from the community at large who are recognized experts on the policy/topic/subject of interest.
 - A proposal of community members to serve on the working group will be brought to Full Council for approval. The proposal will include the names and credentials of the community members.
7. A council member will be assigned, by the Council Chair, to act as a liaison between the working group and the Full Council. The liaison will be responsible for:
 - a. Submitting reports on the working group's progress to the FPC Support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time reports would go to the FPC Coordinator) at a minimum of one week prior to a quarterly Full Council meeting.
 - b. Taking and submitting attendance reports to the FPC staff support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time these would be submitted to the FPC Coordinator).
 - c. Notifying the FPC staff support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time this request would go through the FPC Coordinator) of upcoming meetings.
 - d. Submitting potentially applicable website and social media content to the FPC staff support person (unless as an FPC Coordinator is hired; at which time this request would go through the FPC Coordinator) for review.



8. Working groups will develop and finalize recommendations using the consensus -1 model.
 - a. Final recommendations of the working group will be brought to the Full Council for a vote to accept or to send back to the working group.

Policy Proposals

1. Any member or group of members seeking Council support on a policy or an issue, before bringing it to the council, must first:
 - a. Be able to clearly demonstrate/explain the policy or issue and how it relates to FPC goals and objectives.
 - b. Research how issue has been addressed in similar locations and at other FPCs (if it has)
 - c. Send a written policy explanation, research findings and draft policy proposal to the full council membership at least one week prior the full council meeting (This will give members sufficient time to review the information, prepare comments and questions (this can be done via email).
2. After the first presentation the Council will then choose to:
 - a. to support/not support the issue
 - b. request further information, thus tabling issue until said information is provided
 - c. decide if this policy/information should be brought to the attention of the Board of Health before moving forward
3. If the Council votes to support the issue/policy the proposing member(s) will work to finalize policy proposal based on feedback. They will make sure that the final proposal is placed on the next meeting agenda; and they will provide a copy of the final proposal to all members one week prior to the next full council meeting.
4. Present final policy proposal as recommendation to FPC for approval.
5. Present final policy proposal to Erie County Board of Health for informational purposes.
 - a. In the event that the Board of Health has reservations or requests more information, the FPC member or group of members will address the concerns and provide the additional information per the board's request.
6. Once approved, determine as a council when and how best to roll it out to the appropriate decision makers.

Meetings

1. Meetings of the Full Council will be held bi-monthly (July, September, November, January, March, May). If a need arises to have an interim meeting, the chair may call a special meeting if requested by three or more members.
 - a. Members must have been present for 2 out of the last 3 meetings of the Full Council to vote on an action item.
2. Standing Committees will meet formally during Full Council meetings monthly (July, September, November, January, March, May). Communication between council meetings will be facilitated by the committee chair.



3. Working groups will meet as often as needed to complete task.
4. All Full Council meetings will follow Roberts Rules of Order.
5. No action item can be put to a vote without a quorum present. A quorum is defined as the majority of the voting membership.
 - a. A quorum of the voting membership is for action items at Full Council meetings only.
 - b. Standing committees and working groups will come to a consensus -1 on recommendations and will then bring recommendations to the Full Council for a vote to either accept or send back to committee/working group.
6. In accordance with the open meetings law, all Full Council meetings will be open to the public.
 - a. Pursuant to this law, meeting dates will be posted no later than one week prior.

Contact Information

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